

Recipes included at this site do not appear in
A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

June 2016

FARINA DESSERTS:

Farina Vanilla Custard "Pie"

Winter Creamy Tea-Infused Fruit Gruel

Italian Glazed Farina and Almond Cookies

Turkish Farina – Almond Dessert

Russian Pumpkin Porridge

Iron is important to our body's production of hemoglobin for oxygen transport. Vegetarians and vegans have more of a challenge getting their required iron because the best source of easily absorbable iron, i. e., heme iron, is from animals that also produce hemoglobin—red meats, chicken, fish, and shellfish. Non-heme iron, which is less easily absorbed, is available from a wide variety of plants. Adding the following foods to your diet regularly will provide sufficient iron—enriched breakfast cereals, enriched egg noodles and pasta, cooked beans—including peanuts, *tofu*, seeds and nuts, potatoes, broccoli, asparagus, wheat germ, whole grain breads, spinach and other dark, leafy greens, rice, mushrooms, apricots, raisins, peaches, prunes, olives, and dark chocolate. Vitamin C, taken in the same meal, can improve iron absorption efficiency.

Fifty percent of the RDA of dietary iron is provided by a 120-calorie serving of cooked farina. Few people when asked about sources of iron ever mention this wheat product. Even an ER physician in our local hospital was adamant that we should add meat to our diet when a family member was diagnosed with acute anemia. Instead of looking for the source of the hemoglobin loss, he was all too willing to blame a vegetarian diet.

Farina has always been my go-to meal for the first meal for anyone who is recovering from a gastrointestinal virus. Several small meals of farina cooked in water and later with milk will get the patient's tract back on track gradually. Also, I often choose to eat a dish of farina as my first meal after a long flight; it helps me adjust to the change in meal timing when traveling. Farina cereals, which are made from semolina wheat, are enriched with the vitamin B complex to replace the nutrients lost when the wheat germ is removed by the processing. In addition, cereals and breads are fortified with iron here in the United States under a government regulation which has been in effect since the 1940s. Add the ready availability of whole wheat farina and you really have a food to respect.

Farina is the Latin word for meal or flour. The course grain product can be a useful ingredient for comforting desserts. I have included twenty dishes incorporating farina in the two volumes of *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*—everything from Polish cheese and farina dumplings, Moldovan *croquettes*, and Ukrainian sweet fritters to a Greek custard and a Czech omelet to puddings and cakes. Of course, we can find a few more ways to enjoy what once sustained populations in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe and then just got relegated to the breakfast table.



FARINA VANILLA CUSTARD “PIE”

TPT - 3 hours and 18 minutes;
3 hours = refrigeration period

Friday night suppers during World War II were often “vegetable dinners” since by then the week’s rationed foods had been consumed. Mom often added a glass of milk, canned salmon, or a fried egg to the meal along with an assortment of winter vegetables that we had stored or canned. Protein is often an exaggerated concern to new vegetarians but vegetable dinners or meals centered around a large, complex salad are often a bit protein deficient. Since we have been vegetarians, now forty years and counting, the dessert course has always been a part of the meal in which just a little more protein can be offered. This farina dessert is one of those protein rich family desserts. It seems a little fancier than breakfast farina because it is served up in wedges as you would a pie.

2 cups two-percent milk

1/3 cup farina or Cream of Wheat cereal

6 tablespoons sugar

3 tablespoons fat-free pasteurized eggs

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

**3 tablespoons fruit jam of choice—melted—or
sweetened whipped cream—for garnish**

Prepare an 8-inch pie plate by coating with non-stick lecithin baking spray.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, bring milk to just below the boiling point.

While stirring, sprinkle in farina or Cream of Wheat and sugar. Cook, stirring frequently, until it begins to thicken.

Add pasteurized eggs and vanilla extract. Continue cooking and stirring until the mixture is thick. Turn into prepared pie plate. Spread the cooked cereal mixture to the edges of the pie plate. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours or until firmly set.

If you wish to garnish with jam, do so during the last 30 minutes of the refrigeration period, spreading the melted jam evenly over the “pie” surface. If you wish to garnish with whipped cream, add a dollop to each serving as you serve.

Yields 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Note: This recipe can be doubled and prepared in a 10-inch pie plate, if required.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.7 g.; FAT = 1.7 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 26.9 g. ;
CALORIES = 141; CALORIES FROM FAT = 11%

WINTER CREAMY TEA – INFUSED DRIED FRUIT GRUEL

TPT - 2 hours and 23 minutes;
2 hours = rehydration period

Dried fruits, rehydrated in tea, become a very tasty dessert or even light supper in our winter diet.

1 1/2 teaspoons English Breakfast tea leaves
2 cups boiling water

8 preservative-free dried whole apricots
4 preservative-free dried pineapple slices
2 tablespoons preservative-free dark raisins

1/2 cup skimmed milk
4 teaspoons farina or Cream of Wheat cereal*
1 tablespoon sugar

**1 cup sulfite-free canned apples—preferably home-
canned in light syrup—well-drained**
2 tablespoons fat-free dairy sour cream

In a *warmed* teapot, combine tea and *boiling* water. Steep for about 10 minutes to form a strong tea. Pour brewed tea through a tea strainer into a pie plate.

Arrange dried fruits in the *hot* tea. Allow to rehydrate for at least 2 hours.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine milk, farina and sugar. Cook, stirring frequently, until thickened. Remove from heat.

Put well-drained canned apples into a mixing bowl. Using a fork, mash to an even consistency. Add sour cream and stir to combine well. Add cooked cereal. Stir to combine.

Drain fruits well. Cut pineapple slices into four pieces each. Halve apricots. Add these, with rehydrated and drained raisins, to cereal mixture. Turn into a serving bowl.

Serve at room temperature.

Yields 6 servings
adequate for 4 people



Notes: *Cream of Rice cereal can be substituted.

This recipe is easily halved or doubled, when required.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.0 g.; FAT = 0.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 21.1 g.;
CALORIES = 109; CALORIES FROM FAT = 2%

ITALIAN GLAZED FARINA AND ALMOND COOKIES
CASTEL SANT'ANGELO

Biscotti con Semolino Castel

Sant'Angelo

TPT - 44 minutes

These cookies are named for the treasured morning as we alone walked the parapet of Castel Sant'Angelo, overlooked the Eternal City toward the Dome of St. Peter's, and reenacted Monserrat Caballe's exit from the parapet in "Tosca" at the Metropolitan Opera House so many years before, a performance at which she did not jump. The reason for the name "Biscotti Tosca," as these cookies are often called, is unexplainable but so many Italian dishes are named for operatic events and opera singers that it is not surprising. Versions of this cookie can be found in good Italian bakeries here and in Italy. We are content with our name, the image, and, of course, the taste.

3/4 cup unbleached white flour
1/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

6 ounces (12 tablespoons) butter—softened to room temperature
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 1 egg)

1/2 cup uncooked whole wheat breakfast farina or Cream of Wheat cereal
1/4 cup ground almonds or almond meal

GLAZE:

1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup sugar
2 teaspoons light corn syrup
1/4 cup ground almonds or almond meal

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare several cookies sheets by lining with culinary parchment paper.*

Using an electric mixer or food processor fitted with steel knife, cream the 6 ounces of butter until light and fluffy. Add 1/4 cupful sugar and continue to cream until, again, light and fluffy. Add pasteurized eggs and beat until well-integrated.

Add farina and ground almonds. Beat well. Add sifted flours and baking powder. Beat until dough forms.**

In a saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, prepare glaze by cooking 1/4 cupful butter, 1/4 cupful sugar, and 2 teaspoonfuls *light* corn syrup until sugar is dissolved. Stir frequently. Remove from heat. Add remaining 1/4 cupful almond meal. Set aside until required. Keep warm on a warming tray, if possible.

Drop rounded teaspoonfuls of cookie batter onto parchment-lined cookies sheets. *Space cookies about 1 1/2 inches apart.*

Bake for 10-12 minutes until *very lightly browned*. Remove cookie tray from oven. Brush the prepared glaze evenly over each cookie.

Return the cookie sheet to the oven and allow to bake for 5 minutes more, or until shiny.

Transfer cookies from baking sheets to wire racks to cool completely.

Store in an airtight container.

Yields 36 cookies

Notes: *These cookies can be baked on ungreased cookie sheets, if preferred. The parchment, however, prevents the bottom of cookies from overbrowning and eliminates the cleaning job that may be necessary if the glaze drips down onto the baking sheet. It is now more generally available in well-stocked grocery stores, stores that specialize in kitchen supplies, and from mail order firms, where an unbleached version can often be found. In most European countries, baking paper, as it is known, is found on grocery store shelves next to the waxed paper.

**The dough can be frozen at this point and used, as needed, to prepare as many or as few cookies as you need.

The recipe may be halved or doubled, when required.

1/36 SERVING (i. e., per cookie) –
PROTEIN = 1.3 g; FAT = 4.4 g; CARBOHYDRATE = 9.1 g;
CALORIES = 79; CALORIES FROM FAT = 50%

ORANGE – CREAM FARINA DESSERT

TPT - 4 hours and 12 minutes;
4 hours = refrigeration period

Since wheat has been cultivated, farina has nurtured many, many generations of human beings all over the world. Here in the United States, as Cream of Wheat, it is served almost exclusively as a breakfast cereal. After years and years of running out the door to head for school or work with a comforting stomach-full of Cream of Wheat, it does, whether you like it or not, become a comfort food. When someone is sick, it is the first solid food I reintroduce because it is so easily digested. I use it in cakes and puddings and even cookies, but this pudding is probably the closest to that cold morning comfort I remember as a child. It is also a good way to get a grain into a menu to complement amino acids if you are serving a bean stew or casserole.

1 cup light cream or half and half
1 cup orange juice with pulp*
1/4 cup sugar
1/3 cup farina or Cream of Wheat cereal

Sweetened whipped cream, to garnish, if desired.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine cream, orange juice, sugar, and farina. Cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture thickens. Turn into a non-stick-coated 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan.** Spread evenly to the edges. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

Cut into six rectangular pieces and serve onto dessert plates. Garnish with a dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

Yields 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Notes: *I have, on occasion, made this dessert with tangerine juice and with clementine juice.

**If preferred, divide among six small dishes and then refrigerate.

This recipe can be doubled, when required. Use an 8-inch-square pan.

1/6 SERVING (exclusive of whipped cream garnish) –
PROTEIN = 2.5 g.; FAT = 3.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.2 g.;
CALORIES = 139; CALORIES FROM FAT = 25%

TURKISH FARINA – ALMOND DESSERT

Irmik Helvasi

TPT - 2 hours and 18 minutes;
2 hours = chilling period

Having located a mail order source for organic, whole wheat farina, I started thinking about how my mother and grandmother used farina to make sweet, filling desserts, especially during the winter and more especially during the Depression and the rationing years of World War II. The farina for the pudding was cooked with the morning's hot cereal to save fuel and cooking time. Fresh fruit was neither plentiful nor reasonable and we all wearied of the canned fruit in the fruit cellar. Fruit jams were used to give a cake or a pudding a little extra sweetness but cakes and puddings were desserts that required early morning preparation; cake mixes and pudding mixes were not on our shopping list. Ice cream was a summertime pleasure since we had one of those tiny freezers in the top of the refrigerator which could not even keep the ice cubes frozen. The thick cream on top of the pasteurized, but not homogenized, milk was saved to spoon on top of a pudding like this. In later years, when cream was delivered by the milk man and we no longer depended on the "top milk," "pouring cream," as the cream in the little milk bottle was called, sat on the table in a small pitcher.

As I worked on this pudding, I stumbled on a yellowed card in my recipe files dating from the 1970s. It was a "helva" from Turkey and was similar to this except a sugar/milk syrup was called for instead of honey and it was heavily flavored with cinnamon. It also reminds me somewhat of a favorite Greek dessert. I guess there have always been practical cooks in every culture.

We enjoy this for breakfast in the summer, especially when our young grandson came to stay. He did not view it as just farina any more than I did; pudding for breakfast is a treat.

1 1/2 cups two-percent milk

1/2 cup organic, whole wheat farina*

3 tablespoons finely ground almonds or almond meal

3 tablespoons honey

1/2 teaspoon pure almond extract

Light cream or half and half; top-milk or pouring cream

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat milk until bubbles begin to appear around the edge. Reduce heat to *LOW-MEDIUM*.

While stirring, gradually add *farina*. Cook, stirring frequently, until the porridge thickens. Remove from the heat.

Add *finely* ground almonds, honey, and almond extract. Stir to combine thoroughly. Turn into a 1-quart soufflé dish or other serving dish. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Serve chilled with cream.* Refrigerate leftovers.

Yields about 6 servings
adequate for 4-6 people



Notes: *Cream of Wheat cereal is not a substitute for this type of *farina*, in our opinion.

**If a sweeter pudding is desired, a sauce of equal parts *fat-free* sweetened condensed milk and light cream can be used.

This recipe can be halved, when required.

1/6 SERVING (exclusive of cream) –
PROTEIN = 5.4 g.; FAT = 4.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 25.5 g.;
CALORIES = 168; CALORIES FROM FAT = 26%

RUSSIAN PUMPKIN PORRIDGE

Tykvennaia Kasha

TPT - 13 minutes

In Russia, this porridge would be prepared using cooked and puréed fresh pumpkin and is served only in the fall and early winter when pumpkins are available. We enjoy it throughout the year by using the canned pumpkin/squash product available in the United States. Served as a dessert, or for a breakfast or lunch, it is a convenient and nutritious offering.

2 cups canned pumpkin—unseasoned and unsweetened
1 1/2 cups skimmed milk
3 tablespoons sugar

1/4 cup dry, coarse farina or coarse-ground semolina*

1 tablespoon butter

Sugar or honey

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine pumpkin purée, milk, and sugar. Using a wire whisk, stir to create a smooth mixture. Cook, stirring frequently, until mixture boils.

Reduce heat to *LOW*. Stir in *farina* or semolina and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in butter.

Serve warm with sugar or honey or, if preferred, chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour before serving.

Yields 8 servings
adequate for 6 people

Notes: *Finely ground semolina or farina are too fine to give the texture that this dish should have. The grain should be visible in the finished porridge. *Couscous* can be substituted, with, we think, very good results. Instead of semolina, rice is often enjoyed in this porridge. Add rice at the beginning of the cooking process and allow the rice to cook for at least 15 minutes.

When required, this recipe may be halved or doubled.



1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.1 g.; FAT = 1.7 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 13.4 g.;
CALORIES = 74; CALORIES FROM FAT = 21%

*If you stop back next month, I will share some recipes for tofu
in which the texture and the taste of this useful product,
often dubbed “meat without a bone,” are quite dramatically changed.*

*These techniques transform custardy soybean curd
into something quite different,*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.